



Toll Bridge Program Oversight Committee  
Department of Transportation  
Office of the Director  
1120 N Street  
P.O. Box 942873  
Sacramento, CA 94273-0001

June 5, 2013

The Honorable Mark DeSaulnier, Chair  
California State Senate Committee on  
Transportation and Housing  
State Capitol, Room 2209  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Ted Gaines, Vice Chair  
California State Senate Committee on  
Transportation and Housing  
State Capitol, Room 2209  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator DeSaulnier and Senator Gaines:

Thank you for your letter of May 30, 2013, regarding the Toll Bridge Program Oversight Committee's (TBPOC) testimony at the May 14, 2013, Senate Transportation and Housing Committee hearing regarding the Bay Bridge Project.

Your letter asked four specific questions to which we respond as follows:

Question 1a: Could you include in your request that FHWA also independently verify the conclusions Caltrans draws for the bolts based on the evidence compiled during the inspection?

Response: This is already part of FHWA's scope of work.

Question 1b: Could you specifically ask FHWA to determine what actions are necessary to address the improperly-galvanized tower rods?

Response: The TBPOC has requested that FHWA review all A354 Grade BD galvanized rods used on the project. Caltrans is still in the process of determining whether the tower foundation rods were galvanized according to specification.

Question 2: How does the TBPOC interact with the Design Engineering Team? How involved is the TBPOC in the design and construction decisions, including deviations from state, national, and international standards? In what ways does the TBPOC oversee quality control of the project? For example, was the TBPOC informed of the inspectors using duct tape to close the top of grout injection hoses, as reported in recent media reports?

Response: As you are aware, the TBPOC was established by AB 144 in July 2005 and consists of the Director of Caltrans, and the Executive Directors of the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and the Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA). Major design decisions on the Self-Anchored Suspension (SAS) span and Skyway structures, as documented in the project-specific Design Criteria, were made prior to the creation of the committee.

On more recent design decisions, the TBPOC interacts with the Design Engineering Team through our Project Management Team that includes the Caltrans Program Manager and senior staff from CTC and BATA. Major design issues are reviewed by the Toll Bridge Seismic Peer Review panel with additional supplemental reviews and checks as needed provided by BATA consultants. Caltrans remains the bridge owner and contract manager for the project and provides both direct and consultant staffing for engineering, quality assurance and inspection. From time to time, the TBPOC has become involved directly and intensely in quality control issues such as the welding of the orthotropic box girder sections for the SAS and the current investigation into the anchor bolt failures. The TBPOC was not informed of the example you cite regarding damaged grout injection hoses.

Question 3: Could you reconstruct the timeline involving the bolts, including when members of the TBPOC and you personally were alerted to breaking bolts, when the decision to provide information to the Legislature and the public was made, and who was involved in making that decision?

Response:

Starting on March 1, 2013 through March 5, 2013, the bolts in question were tightened to their designed tension level.

Between March 8, 2013 and March 15, 2013, Caltrans discovered broken bolts. Over that time, 32 of 96 bolts were discovered to have failed.

Between March 13, 2013 and March 18, 2013, individual TBPOC members were made aware of the broken bolts.

On March 14, 2013, Caltrans decided to lower the tension on the remaining unbroken bolts.

On March 21, 2013, the TBPOC as a whole was briefed by the Caltrans Program Manager on the broken bolts. Also on that date, the TBPOC decided to inform the public regarding the broken bolts at the next Bay Area Toll Authority meeting on March 27, 2013.

On March 26, 2013, TBPOC member Malcolm Dougherty directed Caltrans External Affairs staff to notify the Chairs of the Assembly and Senate Transportation Committees regarding the broken bolts.

Question 4: Can you provide a timeline for when the TBPOC will be able to report answers to these questions, and describe the process by which you expect to determine those answers?

Response: The TBPOC plans on issuing a written investigative report by July 10, 2013. The report will be reviewed by the Seismic Peer Review Panel and FHWA prior to its completion.

Thank you for your support and long history of leadership on this challenging project. Please do not hesitate to contact me further if you require any additional information or assistance.

Sincerely,



Steve Heminger  
TBPOC Chair  
Executive Director  
Bay Area Toll Authority